

Message Text

SECRET

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70

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 SAJ-01

DODE-00 H-02 NSC-05 EB-07 TRSY-02 MC-02 OMB-01 /087 W

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R 221850Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4096

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCLANT

USCINCEUR

USLOSACLANT

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T LONDON 13133

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, NL

SUBJECT: PROPOSED REDUCTIONS IN NETHERLANDS ARMED
FORCES

REF: STATE 198550

1. AS INSTRUCTED REFTEL, EMBASSY OFFICER MET WITH
ALISTAIR HUNTER, ACTING HEAD WESTERN ORGANIZATIONS
DEPARTMENT (FCO), TO CONVEY THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH
WE REGARD THE PROPOSED NETHERLANDS FORCE REDUCTIONS,
DESCRIBE THE ACTIONS THE U.S. IS TAKING, AND SUGGEST THE
BRITISH ALSO REGISTER THEIR CONCERN WITH THE GON.

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2. HUNTER AGREED THE PROJECTED DUTCH CUTS WERE WORRI-

SOME AND PROMISED TO FORWARD TO HIS SUPERIORS OUR SUGGESTION FOR A BILATERAL BRITISH APPROACH TO THE GON. HE SAID MATTER WOULD BE DECIDED -- HE HOPED NEXT WEEK -- AT LEAST AT THE UNDERSECRETARY LEVEL, AND OBSERVED THAT UK DEMARCHE TO DUTCH ON THIS ISSUE AT THIS TIME WAS A BIT TRICKY. UK HAD AFTER ALL ONLY RECENTLY COMPLETED ITS OWN DEFENSE REVIEW, WHICH RESULTED IN SIGNIFICANT CUTS IN PROJECTED DEFENSE SPENDING, AND IF "THE DUTCH ARE THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE ALLIANCE, THE BRITISH ARE DARK GRAY". MOREOVER, HUNTER CONTINUED, THERE ARE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE LABOR GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD LIKE TO SEE FURTHER REDUCTIONS IN UK DEFENSE EXPENDITURES AND THUS WOULD WISH TO AVOID CRITIZING THE GON FOR GOING DOWN A ROAD THEY CONTINUE TO FIND ALLURING. ALTHOUGH HUNTER WAS CONFIDENT THAT SUCH EROSION ELEMENTS WOULD NOT UNDERMINE THE WILSON GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION AND ESPECIALLY THAT OF DEFENSE SECRETARY ROY MASON, TO MAKE THE 1974-75 DEFENSE REVIEW ITS LAST, CARE WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN TO AVOID WAVING TOO BRIGHT A RED FLAG AT THEM.

3. COMMENT: OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT EVEN IF THE BRITISH AGREE TO EXPRESS THEIR CONCERN TO THE GON BILATERALLY AS WE HAVE ASKED, IT WILL BE IN THE MOST MUTED MANNER, AND WE FEAR THE ECHO WOULD BE FAINT AT NATO.

RICHARDSON

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLIANCE, MILITARY BUDGET, MILITARY POLICIES, TROOP REDUCTIONS, DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON13133
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750292-0146
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750827/aaaaaxoq.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 198550
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 APR 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <22 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSED REDUCTIONS IN NETHERLANDS ARMED FORCES
TAGS: MPOL, NL, NATO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006